

Raise Awareness of Workplace Bullying on Pink Shirt Day



Feb. 26, 2014 is Pink Shirt Day or Anti-Bullying Day, a day on which Canadians are encouraged to wear something pink to symbolize that we as a society won't tolerate bullying anywhere'whether at school or in the workplace.

As explained by the WSCC for NT and NU, workplace bullying is a common occurrence in workplaces throughout Canada. Often considered rare, bullying among adults is sometimes ignored. But the numbers show bullying in the workplace is a real problem.

Bullying can take many forms, but the primary indicator of bullying is the bully selects targets and seeks to humiliate, threaten, intimidate or sabotage those individuals. It's important to distinguish a bully from a boss with a difficult management style who treats all workers equally and has high expectations of his team.

There are several forms of bullying:

1. **Verbal bullying.** This form is the most common type of bullying and is meant to cause the target emotional pain.
2. **Physical bullying.** Involving physical attacks such as hitting and punching, this form of bullying involves using one's body to gain power over another.
3. **Relational bullying.** This common form of workplace bullying involves ignoring the targets, spreading rumors or gossip about them or purposefully excluding them from work events, meetings or necessary information.

5 Tips for Dealing with Bullying

If you're being bullied at work (use this questionnaire if you're not sure), consider these five tips:

1. Don't ignore what's happening. You may not be the only target.
2. Talk to people you trust, whether a co-worker, manager, HR specialist or union representative.
3. Document the incidents. Having a record is useful if anyone accuses you of lying in the future.

4. If you're comfortable doing so, talk calmly to the bully and explain your concerns with how he's treating you. This approach isn't appropriate in all cases, but sometimes confronted bullies retreat when they know they aren't emotionally dominant.
5. Examine your own behaviour and feelings to ensure you don't perpetuate the bullying cycle.

To prevent bullying, employers must be aware of the culture within their workplaces and ensure that it provides a safe environment'both physically and emotionally'for all workers.

To that end, safety professionals should ensure that their workplaces develop policies on what is and isn't acceptable workplace behaviour, develop procedures for reporting cases of bullying and detail how the employer will deal with cases of bullying.

Go to the OHS Insider's Workplace Violence Compliance Centre for information, tools and resources on workplace bullying, violence and harassment, including:

- WorkSafeBC's new bullying and harassment policies, which took effect Nov. 1, 2013
- The impact of bullying on bystanders
- How to identify a workplace bully
- The costs of permitting workplace bullies
- How common workplace bullying is in Canada
- Information on why employers can't tolerate bullying
- A workplace violence infographic.